DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 264 075 RC 015 553

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TITLE Employment, Economic Development and Education: Lake Manitoba Indian Reserve.
INSTITUTION Lake Manitoba Education Authority, Vogar (Manitoba).
PUB DATE 31 Oct 85
NOTE 51p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *American Indian Education; American Indian Reservations; *Canada Natives; Community Attitudes; Community Surveys; Cooperative Programs; *Disadvantaged Schools; Distance Education
IDENTIFIERS Canada; *Lake Manitoba Indian Reserve; Manitoba

ABSTRACT

The objective of this report was to improve coordination between schooling, economic development, and employment opportunities available within and outside the Lake Manitoaba Indian Reserve. This community was on the average younger than most other rural communities of similar size in the province; moreover, the number of families that frequently move was approximately 25%. The small number of jobs made it likely that young people would have to leave the community to find work. An evaluation of the school system substantiated community concerns about the quality of education and work-related preparation. Although 87.5% of the 195 students in preschool through grade 12 were in the correct grade for their age, attendance was poor, school was open fewer days than the provincial standard, student performance was not evaluated regularly, no vocational courses were offered, and high school enrollment was low. Eighteen familes interviewed expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the school. The report emphasized the need for direct community involvement in educational improvement and offered specific recommendations to provide sound basic education, develop a work-related program reflecting the economic base and employment opportunities in the community, coordinate programs using portable facilities and itinerant teachers with nearby school districts, and use educational technology. (LFL)

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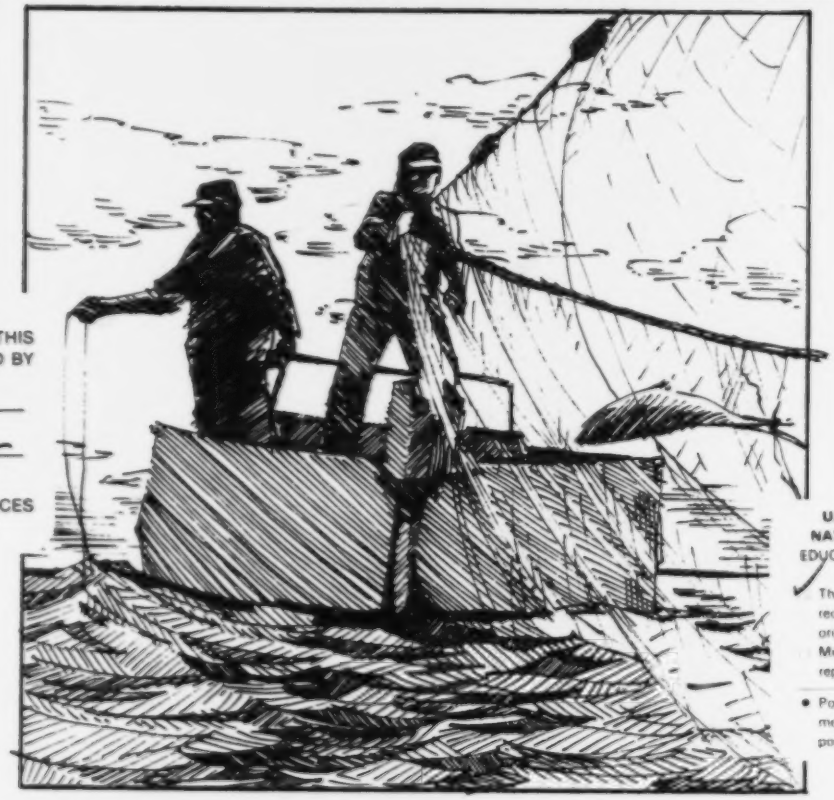
# EMPLOYMENT, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION: LAKE MANITOBA INDIAN RESERVE



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**J. Anthony Riffel** **D. Bruce Sealey**

**with special assistance from Joachim von Stein**

**31 October 1985**

**The Lake Manitoba Education Authority, Vogar, Manitoba, Canada**

RC015553

Mr. Alvin Paul
Director of Education
Lake Manitoba Indian Reserve
General Delivery
Vogar, Manitoba

Dear Mr. Paul:

Please accept this document as the report you requested on the relationship between education and economic development in the Lake Manitoba Indian Reserve. The objective of the report is improve the fit between schooling and the employment opportunities available to young people and adults, whether those opportunities are located within or outside of the Reserve.

The report contains a number of recommendations, most of which are intended to set the stage for further detailed planning. We are confident that, if implemented, the recommendations will lead to an educational system which will keep students in school and help them to experience educational and economic success in the long term.

We believe that many of the recommendations form the basis of a proposal which could be submitted to the Department of Indian Affairs for special funding as a pilot project.

We are prepared to assist you in any way you feel appropriate in the implementation of the recommendations which you choose to adopt.

Sincerely,

J. Anthony Riffel

D. Bruce Sealey

# *Introduction*

"I want a good job. Without one I can't support my family properly."

"The high school doesn't prepare them to continue their education nor does it teach them skills they could use around home or work, and then if it did, there aren't enough jobs anyway."

"I'm afraid if there are no jobs here all my kids will leave the Reserve."

"We don't all need to be bureaucrats and doctors. We need good farmers and businessmen too."

During our study of education in Lake Manitoba we were often told that people wanted to work and that one of the main purposes of education is to prepare people for work. Education helps people to select and prepare for a suitable occupation, to develop the skills and knowledge for economic self-reliance, and to develop positive attitudes to work and pride in workmanship.

People work for many reasons. They work to obtain the necessities of life--food, clothing and shelter. They work to meet other people and make friends on the job. They work to avoid idleness, and the individual and social problems which come from not having anything useful or meaningful to do. They work to help each other and to build a community together.

The kind of work that is available is changing. Old skills are being lost: for example, because fishing is less attractive and economically viable than it used to be,

fewer young people are interested in following their fathers and mothers into this occupation. Today's farmer needs to know much about many new things, including small business management, crop rotation and soil management, the use of fertilizers, welding and diesel and hydraulic mechanics. Many of the best paying and most attractive jobs today are professional and white collar jobs.

Economic pressures are also changing: for example, in farming the size of the economic unit has been increasing, while the number of people required to work on farms has been decreasing. The workforce is changing too: for example, many women whose children have grown up now seek paid employment outside of the home. And so is government policy: while governments once gave priority in employment programs to young men between the ages of 25 and 35, many other groups are now seeking the opportunity to work and governments are beginning to respond with training and job creation and placement programs.

Changes such as these are apparent all over Canada. But they are felt very acutely in many Indian Reserves. This is because many Indian communities were only beginning to develop economically in the late 1970's, just as the national economy was about to slow down. Many communities were devastated by the recession that began in 1981. For example, the International Nickel Company began hiring Indian people from the Nelson House Reserve around 1980. The world minerals recession began in 1981. Because of the recession, many workers were laid off. And because the Indian people of Nelson House were among the last to be hired, they were among the first to be laid off. Similarly, many Indian communities began to develop beef operations in the late 1970's--just before beef prices began to fall and before they had

developed the experience necessary for economic survival under increasingly difficult conditions.

It is because of changes and pressures such as these that education and training for work are so essential. Education can help young people to choose good occupations that are in demand and to prepare for them. It can help adults prepare for new jobs. It can help married women whose families have grown up to prepare to enter the work force for the first time. It can help farmers keep up to date with new agricultural practices and adjust their practices to changing economic conditions.

In this report we outline an approach to education in Lake Manitoba which pays particular attention to the relationships among education, economic development and work. All of us want to keep our children in school and help them to experience educational and economic success. Good working relationships between the school and the community are essential to this, as is a close fit between schooling and the employment opportunities available to students when they leave school.

# *Lake Manitoba: A Social and Economic Profile*

The Lake Manitoba Indian Band lives in central Manitoba on the east shore of Lake Manitoba. Their 9,427 acre Reserve is located about 170 kilometers from Winnipeg and is accessible by paved highway. The Reserve is a diversified area consisting of natural grasslands and woodlands, meadows and marsh. The presence of a high water table, organic soils, poor drainage and generally flat topography limit the development potential of the reserve, whether for agriculture or outdoor recreation activity.

## [] *Population*

According to estimates of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Lake Manitoba Band had a total population of 684 in 1982: of these, 479 persons lived on the reserve and 205 lived elsewhere. The breakdown of the population by age group is shown in Table One.

The table shows that, in 1982, almost fifty per cent of the population was 19 years of age or less, and a relatively small number was over 65. This means that the population of Lake Manitoba is on average younger than that in most other rural communities of similar size in the province.

The table does not describe several other characteristics of the people of Lake Manitoba which are significant. There seems to be a good deal of movement in and out of the community--especially between Lake Manitoba and Winnipeg and, to a lesser extent, Fort Alexander, Manitoba. Estimates of the number of families who

frequently move varies, but it may be as high as twenty-five per cent of all families in the community.

TABLE ONE

LAKE MANITOBA BAND POPULATION, 1982

| Age Group | On-Reserve | Off-Reserve |
|---|---|---|
| 0-4 | 54 | 19 |
| 5-14 | 131 | 57 |
| 15-19 | 59 | 36 |
| 20-24 | 57 | 28 |
| 25-34 | 73 | 21 |
| 35-64 | 85 | 39 |
| 65+ | 20 | 5 |
| TOTAL | 479 | 205 |

The general population figures in Table One also neglect the number of families, and what are called family formation rates, in the community. Both seem to be increasing rapidly. Data available to us show that there were about 60 families in Lake Manitoba in 1977; by 1985 the number had grown to 148, a 250% increase in eight years.

Also unknown are the likely effects of recent federal legislation allowing enfranchised Indian persons (mainly Indian women who married non-Indian men and lost their treaty status as a result) to apply for band membership.

All of these factors have major implications for education, the economy, or the community feeling of Lake Manitoba. High rates of mobility, for example, make it difficult to develop a sense of spirit which involves everyone in the community and also can hamper the education of children in mobile families. The rapid increase in the number of families has wide-ranging implications, especially for the demand for housing and the need to create enough jobs so that at least one person in each family has work. And the large number of young women and men means that many jobs will be needed in the future and, realistically, that most young people will have to leave the community if they are ever to find permanent employment; this in turn means that education will have to give students in Lake Manitoba the high level of skills they will need to compete successfully for jobs with people from other places.

## [] *Economic Activity and Employment*

The main economic activities of Lake Manitoba include public services to band members, agriculture, construction, fishing and small businesses. The information on employment in Table Two was obtained in interviews in the community and gives some indication of the size of each of these spheres of activity. The community is developing and changing rapidly. Recent years have seen an increase in entrepreneurship and the creation of several small businesses, the development of

agriculture, and significant improvements in housing. There has also been a rapid expansion of band educational, administrative and welfare services to its members. While most jobs are in the services area and agriculture, many band members are employed on construction projects, and some individuals own and operate small businesses such as farms, a service station, a store, a restaurant, and a laundromat and confectionery.

TABLE TWO

ESTIMATED EMPLOYMENT, LAKE MANITOBA, 1985

| | |
|---|---|
| fishing licences | 8 |
| full time farming | 10 |
| part time farming | 16 |
| education | 34 |
| other Band services | 20 |
| small businesses | 7 |

Despite what seems to be a relatively high level of economic activity locally, most band members travel elsewhere for shopping, personal services, banking, the purchase of repair parts for agricultural equipment, meetings and so on. The main centers for this are Ashern, Ericsdale, and Winnipeg. In this way Lake Manitoba is like many small agricultural communities throughout Manitoba. But this has an unfortunate side--because people take their money elsewhere, it does not circulate within the community. Their money supports business and employment in Ashern or Winnipeg, not in Lake Manitoba.

Accompanying this is a degree of pessimism. Some people expressed a feeling of powerlessness in economic matters and the view that even if they achieve in education, they may not do well in economic terms because there are no jobs anyway.

Even so, there are a number of positive signs:

- the community is marked by a positive outlook, determination to succeed economically, effective leadership and high expectations for their leaders
- the community has a desire to diversify economically, to promote small business development, and to improve local agricultural practices
- the community has a preference for individual entrepreneurship rather than for Band ownership of businesses, recognizing that some will fail but believing that many will succeed.

## [] *Economic Opportunities*

Our study of the economic situation in Lake Manitoba was done as part of the background to our main task--to make recommendations about work-related education for the community. For this reason we did not approach the economic side of things in great depth.

Nevertheless, it does seem that are some opportunities for further economic activity in the community. These include agricultural development: for example, some swamp land can be drained and some bush lands can be cleared for hay or grain

crops. There may be some opportunities to diversify into intensive agriculture, for example growing raspberries for southern markets. Both of these possibilities were mentioned by the community representative of the Indian Agriculture Program. There are certainly some opportunities for small businesses, especially in the personal services area: one example that comes to mind is hairdressing.

It is difficult to say how many of these opportunities can be pursued realistically or how many jobs they will create. The cost of reclaiming or developing land is very high--often more than the land is worth on the open market. To survive, small businesses will have to persuade members of the community to shop in Lake Manitoba rather than travel to Ashern or Winnipeg, breaking their very strong habits of the last twenty-five years. And much of course will depend on community leadership and on the determination of individuals to succeed economically. However, it is important to note that even if all of these things happen, there still will not be enough jobs in the community or the nearby area for everyone in the growing work force. This means that many people will have to leave the community and look for jobs elsewhere if they are to avoid social assistance.

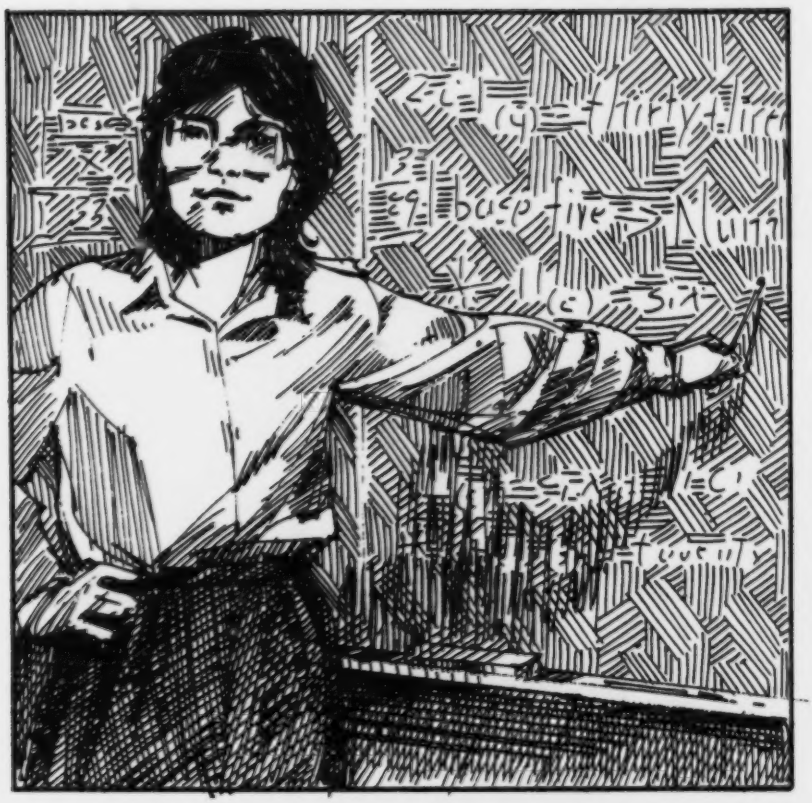
## [] *Summary Observations*

The picture of Lake Manitoba that emerges from this very brief profile is of a growing community which has made a good deal of progress economically in recent years but which faces an uncertain economic future and the likelihood that many people will have to leave if they are to find meaningful employment. Questions can

be raised about the ability of the community to sustain its recent economic activity. While some further opportunities exist in agriculture and small business, it is unlikely that the community can generate enough jobs for those who wish to work. In 1985 there were 95 full and part time jobs (not including homemaking), but about 250 people of working age, in the community. And the implications of Bill C-31 for the Band are not clear. It seems likely that the return of a large number of people to Band membership will place additional strains on the limited resources now available.

All of this means two things. Education and the development of job skills and good attitudes toward work are crucial. Only then will all people, women and men, old as well as young, have the ability to compete successfully in a difficult economic environment.

And, sad as it may be, many people will have to leave the community for work. No matter how fully the community develops, realistically there will not be enough jobs available for those who want or need to work.



***Lake Manitoba:***
***An Educational Profile***

Most members of the community attach high priority to education and training, seeing both as central to the future of the community and of themselves and their children, whether they live and work in Lake Manitoba or elsewhere. Moreover, in the words of one community member, "We don't all have to be bureaucrats and doctors. We need good farmers and businessmen too."

Band members attend the Lake Manitoba School which offers programs from Nursery through Grade Twelve. The school is operated by the Band under the direction of the Lake Manitoba Education Authority. The building is new, well-designed and well-maintained, and suitable for all purposes except technical, vocational and industrial education. At the time of our work, the building was being modified to add classrooms and a proposal for a separate building to house industrial arts had been submitted for funding.

## [] *Enrolment*

Table Three provides information on current and projected enrolments in Lake Manitoba School and shows that enrolments are expected to be relatively stable for the next four years, decreasing slowly from about 195 in 1984-85 to about 183 in 1988-89. The Table was prepared by Underwood-McClellan Associates for the Band, and assumes drop-out rates of 10%, 20% and 20% for Grades Ten, Eleven and Twelve as required by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. No allowance is made in the projections for movement back to the community as a result of Bill C-31 which will return status to enfranchised Indian people or as a

result of the housing program in the community. If drop out rates decline and a significant number of persons return to Lake Manitoba, projected enrolments will have to be revised upwards, by about twenty-five per cent or more.

TABLE THREE
ESTIMATED ENROLMENTS, LAKE MANITOBA SCHOOL
1984-85 TO 1988-89

| | K | SS | 1-6 | 7-9 | 10-12 | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1984-85 | 25 | 26 | 74 | 44 | 29 | 195 |
| 1985-86 | 15 | 26 | 74 | 44 | 29 | 184 |
| 1986-87 | 15 | 26 | 78 | 36 | 35 | 190 |
| 1987-88 | 27 | 26 | 71 | 34 | 33 | 187 |
| 1988-89 | 31 | 26 | 66 | 38 | 32 | 183 |

## [] *Achievement*

We were able to find almost no meaningful information on levels of achievement in

the school. Student cumulative record folders were incomplete and contained few samples of student work. Apparently, standardized achievement tests have not been administered in the school for many years. Nor does it seem that students in the school participated in the Manitoba Provincial Assessment testing program. This is not good educational practice and we will have more to say about it later.

We were able to count the number of students who seemed to be placed in the correct grade for their age. In 1984-85, 87.5% of all students in Lake Manitoba were at a level appropriate to their age; this compares to a provincial average of about 93% and an average of about 50% for the schools in Jackhead and Easterville, Manitoba. This suggests that students in Lake Manitoba seem to be doing much better in school than those in other Indian communities, and not quite as well as those in provincial schools.

We do not have much confidence in the Lake Manitoba statistics, and suspect that achievement in the school is worse than it appears on the surface. Attendance, which we describe next , is poor. Community opinion, which we deal with later, is that education in the school is not satisfactory. Drop-out rates are higher than those estimated above, and high school attendance was very low at about sixty per cent.

## [] *Attendance*

Table Four shows attendance in the school for 1984-85. Average attendance for all grades was seventy-four per cent: this compares to about ninety-five per cent in

many provincial schools, seventy-five per cent in Jackhead and ninety per cent in Easterville. The school was open for 166.5 days, compared to about 185 days in most provincial schools.

TABLE FOUR

LAKE MANITOBA SCHOOL, ATTENDANCE , 1984-85

| | |
|---|---|
| Nursery | 66.1% |
| Kindergarten | 54.0% |
| One | 80.0% |
| Two | 84.9% |
| Three | 83.1% |
| Four | 81.1% |
| Five | 81.1% |
| Six | 84.7% |
| Seven | 79.7% |
| Eight | 74.0% |
| Nine | 74.0% |
| Ten | 66.0% |
| Eleven | 61.0% |
| Twelve | 58.0% |

## *Programs*

Lake Manitoba School follows the curriculum of the Province of Manitoba from the

elementary grades through grade twelve. Junior and senior high school programs, which are of most concern to us and members of the community, are developed around a very limited range of courses calculated to meet the minimum requirements for university entrance or general high school leaving certificates. Notable are the absence of vocational courses, low enrolments in the high school courses, poor attendance and the number of split courses that are offered.

If we were to ask the question, we are sure that most parents and students would like to keep the high school in Lake Manitoba. On paper, the school's program meets the requirements for high school graduation. Parents probably would oppose any arrangement which would involve daily bussing to some nearby school, home placement or living in residence. Parents might be concerned that drop out rates would increase if there were no high school in Lake Manitoba. And little would be gained if students were to attend another tiny high school with a limited range of courses and no real vocational, industrial or technical program.

While we will make no recommendations about keeping or closing the high school section of Lake Manitoba School, we feel that it is important to raise the question. Our experience is that tiny high schools, regardless of where they are located, are educationally inadequate. They can offer too few courses and programs. Because of the need to combine classes, teachers often make compromises in programs which are undesirable. Students get too little exposure to the larger world, and seldom develop the skills that they will need to compete successfully within it.

## [] *Summary Observations*

We cannot come to any firm conclusions on whether education and achievement in Lake Manitoba School are satisfactory. On the one hand, age-grade placement information suggests that it is much better than in most Indian communities in the province and almost as good as the provincial average. On the other hand, our impressions are that achievement is not satisfactory--student performance is not evaluated regularly, attendance is poor, the school is open for fewer days per year than most schools in the province, and drop out rates are high. This is a matter of real concern to us.

The next section of our report shows that our concerns are shared by members of the community. The people whom we interviewed did not have very positive views about their school and expressed serious criticisms, especially about the high school program at Lake Manitoba School.

## *Community Opinion*

To examine community opinion about education in Lake Manitoba, eighteen families were interviewed. All interviews were carefully structured to obtain background information from people, to get their views on the current educational system in Lake Manitoba and on employment in the community, and to seek their advice on the improvement of education in the community. All people were told that the interviews would be treated in strict professional confidence. Nearly all of the interviews took place in homes. They lasted between forty-five minutes and three hours. Often the whole family, including children in school or recent school leavers, took part in the interview. The families interviewed included a total of seventy-nine children, not all of whom were of school age.

## [] *General Opinions*

Nearly three quarters of the people interviewed expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the school system in Lake Manitoba. Sixty per cent felt that the academic standards are low, especially in mathematics. Parents obviously want their children to get a good education, and an education which will make them employable. But, at the present time, they feel that the school is not doing its job very well.

Thirty per cent of the people interviewed remarked that discipline in the school has been far too lenient and that rowdy behavior is tolerated by teachers. At the same time, and somewhat contradictorily, complaints about the treatment of students by teachers were frequently voiced. The most common grievance was that adults in the

school show no respect for students or that students are not treated properly. Few elaborated on how more effective discipline could be established and greater respect for students could be shown at the same time. Their remarks do point out, however, that it will be necessary for school officials and staff to consult with the community and re-examine discipline policies in the school.

## [] *The High School*

People who indicated some satisfaction with the school limited their praise to the elementary section of the school. The high school was the subject of severe criticism. It was suggested that the high school is simply too small to offer the variety of programs which people want for their children. It was also observed that the high school lacks a clear sense of direction. As one person said, "They don't seem to know whether they are an academic, a vocational, or some other kind of high school." The standards in subjects presently offered are seen as low, the demands made on good students as insufficient, and the guidance services as inadequate. Although people know the limits on teachers in a small high school, their expectations are high. A re-examination of the high school program seems wanted.

The community is aware that many students leave school before high school graduation. The people pointed out that there are a variety of reasons why students leave school. The lack of practical and vocationally oriented courses, for girls as well as boys, leads students to leave school. Even those students who would like to continue with post-secondary education know that they are not well prepared to do

so. Other reasons include the lack of motivation on the part of students, frequently mentioned in connection with the lack of job opportunities on the Reserve and in the surrounding area. Boredom with the present high school program and its emphasis on academic work were also mentioned frequently.

Several people mentioned the difficulties parents have in convincing young people to finish school. One father said, "Maybe we just don't push education enough." Another summed it up this way: "The high school doesn't prepare them to continue their education nor does it teach them skills they could use around home or at work, and then if it did, there aren't enough jobs anyway."

## [] *School-Community Cooperation*

All people indicated that parent-teacher-community cooperation is either very poor or simply doesn't exist at all. This view was unanimous and strongly expressed. There was not much agreement on what should be done about this. Some mentioned that parents should go to the school more often and get to know the teachers. Others felt that the Chief, Council, Education Authority and Director of Education should do more to bring about closer co-operation. While few specific suggestions for improvement were made (one was that the school should inform parents of student absences immediately), the sense of dissatisfaction with the current lack of cooperation and the hope for improvements in the future were obvious.

Comments on how parents can help students get the most from education ranged

from quiet support to exposing them to opportunities on and off the Reserve. Over half felt that talking about the importance of education and rewarding good attendance would help. Several people said that students should be exposed to as many careers and training opportunities as possible. More field trips, and particularly field trips with that purpose in mind, were mentioned.

## ▯ *The Role of Teachers*

Even though community members feel that parental support is important if students are to get the most from education, seventy per cent of the people suggested that teachers and the principal have the major role in helping parents understand and improve education. The people are looking for a principal and staff who understand the community and its needs, who are sensitive to feelings and problems, and who are willing to work with the community in an honest and sympathetic manner. Typical remarks were: "trying to understand our children, especially our boys," "treating children with respect and also insisting on quality work," "being strict without being mean," "making parents feel welcome at school," and "understanding that we want a good life for our children too." Past efforts by teachers were recognised, such as home visits and parent-teacher evenings. One parent said, "They've tried but failed. Perhaps the major push must come from Council and us parents. Maybe if we all work together we'll have a better school." This means that parents want to help to improve education in Lake Manitoba, but that they are unsure about two things: they are not certain their help is wanted; and they do not know always know what specific help to give.

## [] *Preparation for Work*

The community knows that one of the tasks of education is to prepare young people for work. Over eighty per cent stated that Lake Manitoba School does not do this at all. A few felt that the school provides for elementary literacy, but does not prepare the older students for work.

Many ways in which the school could do a better job of preparing young people for work were suggested. Among these vocationally oriented courses were often talked about--especially automotive maintenance and repair, small engine repair, welding, businees education, and homemaking skills. Several parents mentioned a divided school day, the morning devoted to academic work and the afternoon devoted to practical or vocational work. More emphasis on job and career information, realistic assessment and better counselling services were also recommended. So were work experiences beginning in grade nine, increased help for slower students, and higher standards in all courses. The community is aware, however, that there is no simple answer and that better preparation for work will require close cooperation among the school, the community and the Band Council.

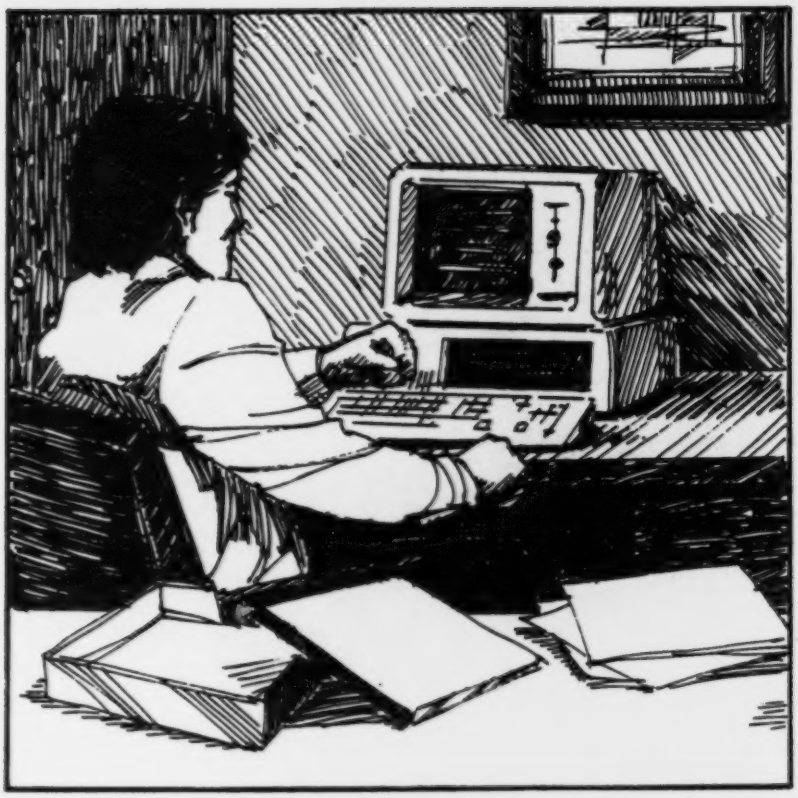
Two-thirds also hope that the school will eventually provide adult education courses for the members of the community at large. There is particular interest in upgrading and vocational courses. These courses could be a natural extension of the regular high school program which people feel must have a strong vocational program for its students.

## [] *Summary Observations*

The community is obviously dissatisfied with the school in Lake Manitoba. Many aspects of education worry parents, such as discipline, academic achievement, and the high school.

At the same time, the community looks forward to new actions and to closer cooperation among school officials, teachers, parents, and the community at large. When they think about education carefully, people recognise that the problems which exist are community problems, not just school problems, and must be solved through the cooperative action of everyone involved.

People responsible for education in Lake Manitoba should capitalize on this situation and see it as an opportunity to do something different and better in education in the community, and to obtain community support for the aims of the school.



## *Recommendations*

Members of the community attach high priority to education and training, seeing both as central to the future of the community, themselves and their children, whether they and their children live and work in Lake Manitoba or elsewhere. They also are aware of the practical obstacles in the way of creating an educational system which will live up to their aspirations. Both the size and location of the Lake Manitoba Reserve make it difficult to develop well-diversified programs of good quality at reasonable cost. In addition, the people have to deal with an educational history that is not completely successful and an educational system with which they are unsatisfied.

These obstacles and difficulties have brought the people of Lake Manitoba to the conclusion that if they are to devise a successful system of work-related education, the system will have to be one which is different from that which has been tried before and one which is tailor-made to their circumstances. New solutions to old problems are needed.

An effective system will need to incorporate several elements. In the pages that follow, we will recommend:

- the provision of a sound basic education for all, in which the essential skills of literacy and numeracy are developed, giving students an opportunity to make meaningful work choices for themselves rather than being tracked into one program or another by the educational system or by their own previous lack of success in education
- the development of a clear statement of goals for work-related education

in Lake Manitoba

- the development of a comprehensive approach to work-related education which will enable students to explore a variety of interests before committing themselves to academic, technical, vocational, industrial, agricultural or other programs

- the development of basic work-related programs for delivery in the community. These might include: clerical and secretarial sciences; home economics; shops (woodworking with an emphasis on basic building construction, metals and welding, electrical and mechanical); graphic arts and drafting; small motor repair; agriculture, soil management and animal husbandry; and small business management. These basic programs could be offered in the school, according to a rotating schedule based on needs, both to young people and to interested adults. It is important that all programs be equally available to males and females. It is essential that these programs reflect the economic base and employment opportunities available in the community

- the development of coordinated programs, the provision of portable facilities and the employment of itinerant teachers to be shared among several of the communities which make up the Interlake Tribal Division for Schools

- the use of technology to enable the residents of Lake Manitoba to gain access to training from other centers. It is important that this work be individualized and based on the competencies of learners rather than only on the rules and regulations of institutions. Computer and communications technology, and a growing volume of computer-based learning materials, make it possible for the residents of Lake Manitoba to gain training without going to the expense and personal dislocation associated with moving to another center for this training.

Because Lake Manitoba is so similar to other communities, this could well be seen as a pilot project which, when successfully implemented, could be used as a model throughout the Interlake region and, indeed, in other parts of Manitoba and Canada.

## [] *Basic Education for All Students*

A sound basic education for all persons, old and young, women and men, is important for a number of reasons. Access to such an education is guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. It is essential to making a living and participating in the community. And it enables people to make meaningful occupational choices for themselves. Without a sound basic education students either leave school because they have not been successful there or are tracked into programs which may not reflect their interests, real talents or aspirations.

The information we have about the effectiveness of basic education (grades one through six) in Lake Manitoba School is mixed. Age-grade placement statistics are fairly satisfactory, but we do not have much confidence in them because there are too many other indications of unacceptable performance, especially poor attendance levels, high drop out rates and a great deal of community concern about the quality of education.

Assuming that our impressions of poor academic achievement are valid, certain immediate steps are needed. We recommend that:

1. the Lake Manitoba Education Authority undertake immediately a thorough evaluation of the school, paying particular attention to levels of achievement, programs and the quality of teaching in the school; and

2. based upon the results of this evaluation, the Lake Manitoba Education Authority develop (a) a clear statement of goals for basic education in Lake Manitoba, (b) plans for improving student attendance, (c) procedures for increasing parent involvement in education, (d) plans for increasing the length of the school year to the normal ten months and (e) steps to ensure the regular evaluation of student performance and school programs.

We cannot emphasize these two recommendations too strongly. Any educational system is only as good as the foundation on which it is built.

## [] *Goals for Work-Related Education*

To be effective a school requires a clear sense of direction. Its purposes must be understood and supported by the community. Its goals must make clear what is expected of everybody, including administrators, teachers, students and the community.

Goals should involve more than keeping students in school and out of trouble. They should emphasize important academic, intellectual, vocational and community goals

for all students and they should be visible in all activities of the school--teaching, learning, administering and dealing with the community.

Many possible goals for work-related education can be identified, including the following examples:

- to learn how to select and prepare for a suitable occupation
- to develop skills and knowledge for economic self-reliance
- to develop positive attitudes to work and pride in doing work well
- to learn to cooperate with others
- to learn to make a contribution to the community.

This is a short list of possible goals for work-related education in Lake Manitoba. The list is intended to be a beginning point for discussions about what work-related education should be expected to accomplish. We recommend that:

1. the Lake Manitoba Education Authority consult widely and develop clearly stated goals for work-related education in the community;

2. the Authority communicate these goals to the community, students and staff of the school; and

3. the Authority hold itself, staff and students accountable for the accomplishment of these goals.

## [] *A Comprehensive Approach*

The main concern of this report is improving the fit (especially in grades seven through twelve) between school and the world of work. The need for this is evident when one examines the community's hopes for its own development and economic diversification and when one considers the number of people for whom jobs are not available locally.

A comprehensive approach to work-related education has many elements:

- the development of responsibility, initiative, pride in work well done, and positive attitudes twowards work
- work experience and study, in which students students are actually involved in meaningful work and have an opportunity to study how they might become better workers or how to deal with problems they will encounter when they take up regular employment
- exploratory work experience, so that students can gain exposure to a number of different occupations before choosing the one that is of most interest to them
- parental involvement, especially in vocational counselling. This may be particularly important for those students whose occupational interests will take them away from home
- vocational counselling by qualified counsellors, to assist students to make informed occupational choices for themselves
- employer involvement, to ensure that work placements are available for

student, that s the work experience is meaningful and that the experience of students will be educational

- community-based learning, to see to it that all of the resources of the community are used effectively. This also means community involvement in the identification of priorities for work-related education and in encouraging people to apply for training
- community service programs, to reinforce the idea of cooperation and that people work to build communities together.

Work-related education is a difficult problem to come to grips with in small communities like Lake Manitoba where there are few businesses or other locations in which students might get their work experience. Nevertheless, the limited opportunities must be utilized, and every attempt must be made to reach out into the surrounding area for student placements and employer involvement.

We recommend that:

1. the principal, counsellor and vocational education and industrial arts teachers of Lake Manitoba School, in consultation with the Director and Superintendent of Education, develop a plan for work-related education . The plan should take into account the elements noted above and should be ready for partial implementation in February, 1986, and full implementation in September, 1986;

2. those responsible for the development of plans for work-related

education should seek further professional advice in this area. We suggest contacting George Porozny at the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba; and

3. every effort be made to find work-experience placements for students in the community, the surrounding area, nearby communities such as Ericsdale and Ashern (the office and shops of the Interlake Tribal Division for Schools are obvious possibilities) and, perhaps, Winnipeg and Brandon.

More detailed information on the steps in the creation of such a comprehensive plan for work-related education and on some of the important features of such a plan can be found in Appendix A to this report.

## [] *Basic Work-Related Education in the School*

A number of steps have already been taken by the Chief and Council, the Lake Manitoba Education Authority, and the Interlake Tribal Division for Schools to strengthen industrial and vocational education in Lake Manitoba School. These steps include: the appointment of a qualified industrial arts teacher; the development of a home economics area within the main school building; the identification of programs which reflect the economic base of the community; the introduction of farm mechanics programs from John Deere; the development of a preliminary

proposal by Underwood-McClellan Associates for a new industrial arts facility; and the requisitioning of start-up funds for a new Industrial Arts program.

While we have some concerns that there are more programs available for young men than there are for young women, these have been important steps and everyone involved is to be commended for them. We recommend that:

1. every effort be made to ensure that existing plans for industrial arts education in Lake Manitoba School be brought into operation successfully. In the first instance this will involve obtaining an infusion of funds for start-up costs;

2. the Lake Manitoba Education Authority give priority to securing capital funds to ensure that needed facilities are available;

3. the role of the school counsellor be examined to ensure that the counsellor is well-qualified and that appropriate emphasis is placed upon vocational and occupational counselling; and

4. a review be made of occupational, vocational and industrial education opportunities for young women, with a view to ensuring that young women have as wide a range of opportunities as do young men.

## [] *Portable Facilities*

We have already mentioned that there are many problems associated with trying to provide a variety of vocational, occupational and industrial programs to students in small communities at reasonable cost. One alternative which has been used successfully in some parts of rural Manitoba involves developing coordinated programs and sharing mobile training facilities and itinerant teachers among a number of communities. The smaller and larger communities which make up the Interlake Tribal Division for Schools could move in this direction--by pooling their resources and sharing teachers and facilities, they could provide programs together which no one community alone could operate effectively or at reasonable cost. We understand that the Superintendent has explored this possibility, and that it has been rejected by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. We can only say that this is most short-sighted on the part of the Department, and that it should be urged strongly to reconsider. We recommend that:

1. the Superintendent of Education for the Interlake Tribal Division for Schools, in consultation with the Directors of Education and Lake Manitoba and other communities, develop a plan for shared industrial and vocational educational programs, teachers and facilities in the Division; and

2. the member Bands of the Division review, revise as necessary and then strongly support this plan and ensure that the funding necessary to operate

it successfully is received.

## [] *The Use of New Technology for Learning*

Another alternative for small communities involves the use of communications and computer technology to bring the learning resources of the outside world to the people of the community. Through this technology, the people of Lake Manitoba could gain access to the best education and training available, whether it comes from Winnipeg, Toronto or Minneapolis.

The use of this technolgy in work-related education has many advantages. It is less costly in the long run: for example, after systems have been installed, people no longer need to travel out of the community for training. It has fewer negative social consequences: since people no longer need to leave the community for training, family life is not disrupted and people don't experience the loneliness of being in a large, strange city. It can be individualized: people can avoid frustrating institutional regulations and take only those parts of training programs which interest them or which they need. And it can be competency-based: this means that people will be given recognition for what they already know and can begin at a level that suits the knowledge they already have, without having to start at the beginning and repeat what they have already learned.

This technology has two other important advantages in the Lake Manitoba context.

It is especially suitable for the education of adults. This is because adults already have many competencies--asking them to begin again is frustrating and many adults do not like going to school with young children or adolescents. And it is much more motivating than regular correspondence education--multi-media instruction is interesting and through computers people can interact directly and get prompt feedback on their work.

It should also be known that Manitoba already has several institutions which follow this approach to education, especially the Kirkness Learning Center and the Manitoba Technical Training Center in Winnipeg and, in some fields, Red River and Assiniboine Community Colleges. Programs and courses are available in many fields--regular high school courses, basic education for adults, and technical, vocational and industrial training in many areas.

This approach to education is being used with good results in parts of Canada and the United States. For example, Lethbridge Community College offers a program of agricultural education following this approach, parts of which are offered in nearby Indian communities. The state of Alaska uses computer and communications technology very extensively in providing high school education to small, isolated native communities.

One of the leaders in this field is the Control Data Corporation which offers programs and courses on its PLATO system. This system includes more than 13,000 courses for all purposes. Their agricultural programs are quite extensive and very practical. For example, their farm business fundamentals program, which

takes about 27 hours to complete, includes twelve modules covering: the nature of farming; getting started; selecting a farm; crops; livestock; selecting machinery; organizing records; labor management; cash flow; financing; buying and selling; and managing risk. Their farm record keeping and analysis program is designed to help people with little or no training in setting up and keeping accurate and complete farm records.

Finally, it should be noted that the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development is currently studying distance education and its uses in high school and adult education. We infer from this that the Department might welcome a proposal along these lines.

We recommend that:

1. the Lake Manitoba Education Authority, and some adult members of the community who are considering returning to school, visit the Kirkness Adult Learning Center in Winnipeg and the Lethbridge Community College in Lethbridge, Alberta, to gain an appreciation of the values of this approach to work-related education;

2. the Superintendent of the Interlake Tribal Division for Schools seek proposals, on a tender basis, for work-related education using the new computer and communications technology. Control Data Corporation, which operates the Kirkness Adult Learning Center and which has extensive experience in this area as well as access to thousands of courses or

programs, has expressed its interest in making such a proposal. Proposals could be sought initially in argicultural and business education; and

3. selected proposals be submitted for funding by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development as a pilot project with wide ranging implications for small Indian communities throughout Canada.

*Appendix:*

# *Guidelines for Developing a Work Experience Program*

From: School and the Workplace: The Need for Stronger Links, The Canadian Education Association, 1983.

1. *An advisory committee should be organized in each high school system which has, or is initiating, a work experience education program.*

The membership of the system advisory committee should include both laymen and professional educators. The laymen should be community leaders who represent labour, business, industry, agriculture, and other similar groups. The professional educators should include the superintendent, principal, program co-ordinator, guidance counsellor and at least one teacher. A representative of the Department of Education could also be included on the committee.

The primary function of this committee should be to determine the philosophy, objectives, and policies which govern the program. It should also serve as a liaison group between the school and the community. Continuous evaluation of the program should likewise be a concern of the committee.

Meetings of the local advisory committee should be held at least once each semester, and inactive members of the committee should be replaced whenever such inactivity appears likely to persist.

2. *The term "work experience education" should be used only in reference to a program in which students participate for school credit.*

Non-curriculum, non-credit work activities of students must not be considered as part of any work experience program. The work experience program could be placed under three classifications: (a) exploratory work experience education, (b) general work experience education, and (c) vocational work experience education.

*Exploratory work experience education:* An opportunity to observe and sample systematically a variety of conditions of work for the purpose of ascertaining one's interest, aptitude and suitability for particular occupations.

*General work experience education:* An opportunity to acquire desirable work habits and aptitudes in real jobs as well as learning general vocational skills.

*Vocational work experience education:* An opportunity to extend the vocational skills in the area of the students' vocational choice and for which their course in school is preparing them.

3. *Admission to the work experience education program should be limited to only those students for whom careful planning, supervision, and evaluation will be provided by school personnel and for whom the experience will have genuine educational value.*

As it is true of other curriculum experience, the work education experience should be carefully planned to meet a definite purpose, carefully supervised to assume best learning conditions and procedures, and carefully evaluated to assess results. This planning, supervising, and evaluating not only should involve the students, parents and employers, but it also must extensively involve school personnel so that the work experience may qualify for curriculum recognition along with other school subjects and so that the experience may be of greatest value in achieving educational objectives.

Any student who is not provided with this comprehensive service by the school should not be considered as taking part in the work experience education program and should, of course, not be given school credit for part-time employment. The giving of credit *ex post facto* for some employment experience a student may have had during previous years in high school should not be practised.

4. *A sound basis for the assignment of students to a given classification of work experience education and for determining the ratio of on-the-job hours to semester periods of school credit which they may earn for participation in the classification must be developed and followed.*

Inasmuch as secondary school students may take part in any one of these three classifications of work experience education, it is essential that the reasons for assigning them to one rather than to another be well based. The chief factor to consider in this matter is the purpose that is to be served by the student's participation in the program.

If the chief purpose of the student's participation is that of getting vocational guidance through having "opportunities to observe and sample systematically a variety of conditions of work for the purpose of ascertaining his suitability for the occupation the student is exploring," the student should be assigned to the exploratory work experience education classification. In this type of experience there should be no intention of teaching production skills of any kind.

If the chief purpose is that of acquiring "desirable work habits and attitudes in real jobs," the student should be assigned to the general work experience education classification. If the basis of participation is "the extension of vocational learning opportunities . . . for which their course in school is preparing them," the student should be assigned to the vocational work experience education classification.

5. *Work experience education "agreement sheets" should be prepared and used for each kind of job open to students in the program.*

An informal one-page agreement sheet should be written for each kind of job in the program. The agreement sheet should include, in outline form, statements describing the major work experience that the student will have in the job, statements of the most important educational objectives to be sought in the job, and spaces for signatures of student, school representatives, employer, and parent — indicating approval of the agreement from each.

These agreement sheets should be prepared co-operatively by the program co-ordinators and the employers, and their form and content should be approved by school administrators as well as by the program advisory committee. This practice would do much to clarify the nature and purpose of participation in the various kinds of jobs, and a file of these agreement sheets would be most useful to a student, the parents and school counsellors in the selection of a job in the program.

6. *Program development and operation should be guided by federal, provincial, and local regulations.*

Federal, provincial, and local regulations must, of course, be followed to the letter in any program, and adherence to the spirit of those regulations is equally important. Care must also be taken to see that proper liability insurance is provided.

7. *The work experience education program should be closely related to school counselling services and to government employment office services.*

Since a primary function of the program is one of vocational guidance, it should rely heavily on the services of school counsellors and

employment office personnel. Every student who is placed in the program should have advice and clearance from the school's guidance office, and, although any program co-ordinator or teacher should be free to suggest that a given student take part in the program, the responsibility for selecting and screening the participants should basically be that of guidance personnel.

8. *The work experience education program should be co-ordinated with activities in the high school.*

Great care should be taken to avoid divorcing the participants' on-the-job experience from in-school experience in the work experience education program. Each of these kinds of experience should supplement and enrich the other. When feasible (as, for example, in business education), and if the numbers of students in similar jobs warrant doing so, special classes for these participants should be organized in the high school. When this is not feasible, special job-related "units" should be offered in appropriate regular classes.

So that teachers may know which students are in the program and what their jobs are at the beginning of each semester the program co-ordinators should send every teacher a list of these students and their assignments. In addition, copies of the students' work experience education agreement sheets, referred to in recommendation number 5, should be made available to the teachers who have program participants in their classes.

School clubs should also be organized for students who are in the program. These clubs should meet semi-monthly, providing opportunities for talks by employers, counsellors, teachers, and others, and affording opportunities for the students to exchange ideas and discuss problems. Active membership in a work experience education club should be required of all students who are in the program.

9. *The work experience education program should be related to the objectives of both general education and vocational training.*

In every classification of work experience education, emphasis should be placed on helping the student to assume responsibility, to develop mature self-concepts, to work effectively with others, and to achieve numerous other objectives commonly considered goals of general education. The achievement of objectives directly related to vocational education and training should also be emphasized in every classification. In the exploratory classification the major vocational objectives to be achieved are those of acquiring occupational information and of determining suitability for the occupations explored, but the development of production skills should not be expected. In general work experience education, however, the development of some basic vocational skills (as well as desirable work habits and attitudes) is to be expected, even though these skills need not necessarily be directly related to their future occupations. In vocational work experience education a marked emphasis should be placed on the development of specific vocational skills that are essential to the students' subsequent full-time employment as a competent worker in the occupation of their choice.

10. *Student orientation to the work experience education program should be provided at the beginning of senior high school.*

Through the school's counselling program, students should be fully advised about the opportunities afforded by the work experience education program when they enter high school.

11. *Students in the work experience education program should be given on-the-job supervisory visits by school representatives at least once a month.*

Among the most important functions of a program co-ordinator is that of paying supervisory visits to students while they are on their jobs. Through such visits the co-ordinator can best become acquainted with the conditions under which the students are working, with the quality of the students' participation, and with their needs for related help at school. The visits also provide a sound basis for conferences with employers, parents, and teachers, as well as with the students themselves.

Although highly time-consuming, these visits should be made to each student at least once a month. This means, of course, that co-ordinators should be available for visiting at all times that the students are working.

12. *Students in the work experience education program should be required to be in full attendance at school when they are not assigned to areas outside the school.*

13. *Written evaluations of students in the program should be made by employers at least once for each assignment.*

In addition to attendance reports, which employers should send to the school each week, evaluative reports should be prepared by employers. These reports should be made on forms which incorporate many of the same items that appear on the work experience education agreement sheets referred to in recommendation number 5. The evaluation should be made in terms of the student's progress toward achievement of the goals agreed upon in terms of the student's co-operation, responsibility, initiative, dependability, and similar personal qualities.

The specific nature of the report form used in various kinds of employment situations should be determined jointly by the program co-ordinator and the employer and should be subject to approval by the school administrators and by the advisory committee.

These evaluations by the employers should, of course, be supplemented by evaluations prepared by the co-ordinator. The grade given to a student for his participation in the program should reflect each of the evaluations that apply to him or her.

14. *Adequate records regarding students' work experience education should be retained in the permanent cumulative files of the high school.*

It is much more important to keep adequate records of student activity for which credit is given than of activity for which no credit is given. In science and mathematics, for example, better records must be kept of students' work than in some non-credit extra-curriculum program. Accordingly, if the work experience education program is a credit program, the records kept of participants in the program must be as complete and accurate as possible.

These records will prove to be of much value to school personnel when in subsequent years prospective employers of graduates from the high

school request information and recommendations regarding the former students. The records will also prove to be most useful in any evaluative study which is made of the work experience education program in a high school district.

15. *The ratio of students enrolled in the work experience education program to school personnel who co-ordinate and supervise the program should be held to a level that will assure the greatest effectiveness in time and effort expended by the co-ordinators and educational values gained by students.*

The minimum daily time that should be allocated to a co-ordinator during the development of a new work experience education program is two class periods, and this time should probably not have to be increased until as many as 10 students are enrolled in the program. It is recommended that three class periods be given to co-ordinators when from 10 to 20 students are enrolled; that four class periods be given when from 20 to 30 students are enrolled; and that full-time be given when from 30 to 40 students are enrolled.

Variations in local conditions and circumstances will affect the feasibility of implementing this suggestion, but it is most unlikely that the provision of less time for co-ordination could do a good job with more than 40 students. For that number of students the co-ordinator would have to make numerous supervisory visits in addition to holding conferences with the students' employers, their teachers, their counsellors, and in many instances, the parents. Furthermore the co-ordinator would have conferences with the students at school, and would supervise the keeping of all records of their work experience. Co-ordinators would also be expected to organize and even conduct, when appropriate, related classes or clubs at schools. It is likely, too that they would be called on to assist in placement and follow-up service of not only these students but also former students who have graduated from the high school.

All of these activities would be carried on continuously in an established program. Along with them would be the need, especially in a new program, for finding employers to take part in the program and for acquainting these employers with what is expected of them.

The carrying on of this job in such a manner as to assure that the highest quality of educational achievement by the participants can be expected only if the program co-ordinators' assignments and responsibilities are held to a reasonable level; and since the quality of the program must be considered much more important than its size, the number of students enrolled in it must be restricted enough to allow essential co-ordinator services.

16. *Adequate clerical services, office facilities, and means of transportation should be provided to those who direct and co-ordinate the work experience education program.*

For the program co-ordinators to perform a great deal of secretarial work themselves is a most uneconomical use of a professional's time. Less costly personnel should be engaged to do such work so that the co-

ordinators may be permitted to carry on the aspects of the work for which only they are qualified.

Sufficient office space for conducting conferences, for housing secretarial and clerical activities, and for sorting record forms must be provided to permit effective and efficient handling of the program; and, of course, necessary items of equipment and furniture must be furnished.

17. *The responsibilities of work experience education program co-ordinators should be clearly defined, and competencies to assume these responsibilites should be assured.*

Since the position of the work experience education program co-ordinator is a relatively new one and since programs have varied somewhat from community to community, the responsibilities of the co-ordinator are not as yet precisely defined. It is good that a precise definition of the job was not made during the years when experimentation and flexibility in the position were essential. The time has now probably come, however, when such a definition is not only possible but desirable — especially for a full-time role in the position.

It is suggested that a job analysis be made of the activities engaged in by the program co-ordinators and that an attempt be made to determine which activities are most pertinent to the achievement of the objectives of the program and what competencies are most essential for carrying on these activities effectively.

Competencies in pupil guidance and counselling are, in all probability, among the most important qualifications of a work experience education program co-ordinator. Competencies in teaching and administration are also likely to be of much value, as are competencies in various aspects of the business world. Fundamental to success in the co-ordinator's activities, moreover, is a dedication to the program objectives, a willingness to serve beyond the "normal call of duty," and the ability to work well with both youths and adults and with both laymen and educators.

18. *A continuous program of interpretation of the work experience education program should be carried on.*

Through regular and special school bulletins, newspaper stories, periodical articles, school and community meetings, and other means, information about the program and interpretation of its purposes, achievements, needs, and problems should be systematically provided to school board members, teachers, employers, parents, and other laymen of the school district.

Only in this manner can intelligent and consistent support of the program be gained and maintained. Mere "enthusiasm" for the program, essential though such enthusiam may be, is not enough; support must be based on an understanding of the program and on factual information about the "what" and "how" of the program. Uninformed or unfounded enthusiasm can be quickly dissipated and may even backfire; all actions taken should be based on facts that are clearly presented and widely disseminated.

19. *Periodic comprehensive evaluative studies should be made of a school district's work experience education program.*

Although program evaluation should be inherent in the very conduct of the program, comprehensive evaluative studies of its purposes, procedures, and outcomes should be made from time to time.

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